

State of California
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Department of Transportation

POLICY MATTERS
Safety Roadside Rest Area Program
Information Item

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INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON THE SAFETY ROADSIDE REST AREA PROGRAM

ISSUE

This presentation will inform the California Transportation Commission (Commission) about the Department's efforts to rehabilitate and expand the Safety Roadside Rest Area System, including progress on public-private development and operational partnerships.

BACKGROUND

The first Safety Roadside Rest Area System Master Plan was developed at the request of the Legislature in 1962. That plan was the basis for 1963 legislation that directed the Department to plan, design, construct and maintain a system of rest areas at approximately 30 minute spacing outside of urban areas. Rest areas were to provide safe stopping opportunities for motorists to stretch, take short naps, use comfort stations, get water, eat, check maps and information, and make phone calls. Today's 88 existing rest area, constructed between 1968 and 1984, are used by approximately 100 million visitors each year.

The 1962 Rest Area System Master Plan included 269 units. In 1967, the plan was increased to 278 units for inclusion of "map stops" at urban edges. In 1974, due to reduced transportation funding, the plan was cut to 162 units by increasing the spacing of units to 60 miles apart.

Transportation funding shortages in 1984 led the Commission to consider total curtailment of the rest area program. However, the Commission agreed to consider 13 new rest areas to fill gaps of over 100 miles in the rest area system, provided that they be public-private partnerships. A new "Revised Initial Plan" (104 units) and privatization policy was developed by the Department and adopted by the Commission in 1985.

Department-sponsored legislation was approved for a pilot project of up to six "joint economic development" rest areas. However, federal statutes prevented commercial activities within the right of way of the Interstate System, and FHWA policy extended that restriction to all federal-aid freeways. Over the next decade, the Department's solicitation of private partners was hindered by this restriction, and opposed by local businesses, local government, the California Department of Rehabilitation (which administers a program for blind vending operations in rest areas), and the National Association of Truck Stop Operators (now called NATSO). Between 1984 and 2000, aging rest areas were maintained with minor repair projects only.

In 1997 the Commission agreed with the Department's recommendation to improve the existing rest area system. An improvement team, including stakeholder agencies and organizations, stressed the safety function of the rest area system and recommended development of a new master plan and investigation of in-route truck parking issues. It also recommended elimination of mandatory privatization, in favor of a policy that encouraged public-private and interagency partnerships in developing and operating rest areas.

These recommendations were shared with the Commission in November 1999. The Commission emphasized its interest in continuing to seek private partners to share in the construction and operation of all new rest areas, and asked the Department to work with agencies and organizations historically opposed to privatization to find common ground for their support.

At the Commission's May 2000 meeting, the Department reported on its progress to develop a new Rest Area System Master Plan and described its efforts to develop partnerships for system capacity enlargement, and safety and operational improvements. The Department also described a concept for supplementing existing capacity-deficient rest areas with partnered auxiliary parking facilities.

Since its last report, the Department has been doing a number of things to implement system improvements and advance the Commission's privatization objectives:

2000 Safety Roadside Rest Area System Master Plan

The Department developed a new Rest Area System Master Plan in 2000, which identified 80 locations where new or relocated rest area services are needed. The Master Plan is intended to provide a long-range (30-40 year) view of new rest area needs, and provides a basis for soliciting and considering joint development and operations proposals. The Plan also estimates parking-capacity deficiencies at each of the 88 existing rest areas for the years 2000 and 2020. The 2000 Plan has not been formally approved by either the Department or the Commission.

FHWA Partners for Adequate Parking Facilities Initiative

As part of a FHWA report to Congress regarding strategies to reduce truck parking shortages, the Department surveyed all identified truck stop operators in California to quantify available overnight parking. The report identified a year-2000 deficiency of 8,100 public truck parking spaces in California, a deficiency that is expected to grow to 12,400 by 2020.

This report also identifies the attitudes of truck stop operators regarding public-private partnerships which will assist the Department in identifying appropriate methods to partner on new rest areas and auxiliary parking facilities.

Rest Area Rehabilitation

The Department has identified projects to complete a first stage rehabilitation of its 88 existing rest areas. Current program levels allow for accessibility improvements, replacement of deteriorated rest rooms, improvement of water, wastewater disposal and lighting systems, increase in rest room capacity where most needed, addition of crew rooms and lockers for disabled maintenance contractors, and drop-in offices for California Highway Patrol officers.

Parking-capacity deficiency, as quantified in the 2000 Master Plan, and information from the California Highway Patrol on unauthorized roadside parking locations, has allowed the Department to prioritize locations where additional rest areas and auxiliary parking facilities should be developed with the private sector.

Operational Partnerships

The Department is partnering with the California Highway Patrol to increase the presence and effectiveness of officers at rest areas for increased security. A joint operational agreement between the Department and the California Highway Patrol has been updated to highlight efforts by both agencies to improve safety and security at rest areas.

In partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation, the Department is facilitating the inclusion of vending machines managed by blind entrepreneurs, as part of each rest area rehabilitation project.

Pursuit of Development Partners to Implement Master Plan and Commission Direction

The Department is requesting partnership proposals for the development of new rest areas on Route 99 at Chowchilla, at three location on Interstate 5 between Buttonwillow and Westley, on Route 50 near Kyburz, and on Interstate 8 near the Sand Hills. Proposals are also being sought for the first auxiliary parking facility to supplement Elkhorn rest area near Sacramento. The proposal process has been designed to allow a wide variety of partnership options to be submitted and evaluated.

New rest area needs have been prioritized statewide, giving preference to Interstate and major commerce routes, areas with large gaps in service, and areas where the nearest rest areas are severely overcrowded or where unauthorized roadside parking is chronic. Districts are encouraged to initiate the highest priority projects, as well as any project where there is significant private sector partnership interest. High priority projects that fail to attract development partners will be submitted for public-only funding. Lower priority needs will only be brought forward when partnerships have been negotiated.

California's Safety Roadside Rest Area System

California Transportation Commission - December 12, 2001



Rest Area History

- **Driver Resting Opportunities - 1931.**
- **First Rest Area Master Plan - 1962.**
- **1963 legislation.**
- **91 Safety Roadside Rest Areas built 1958-1984.**
- **100 million visitors.**



Previous CTC Guidance

- **1985** Obtain joint development partners for 13 new rest areas.

Master Plan approved - 104 units.

Caltrans efforts

- **1985** Encourage privatization, joint development.

3 Rest Areas closed due to extreme operational problems.

Minor repairs to meet minimum health and safety requirements.

Previous CTC Guidance

- **1996** Inventory needs, cost trends & alternate facilities.
- **1997** Develop privatization report.
Explore facility closures.

Caltrans Report

■ 1997

Recommendations to CTC:

- No rest area closures.
- Facility rehabilitation.
- New rest areas in rural areas
 - Public funds.
- New rest areas in urban areas
 - Private funds.
- Master Plan update recommended

Caltrans efforts

■ 1999 Rest Area System Improvement Team

Rest Area Report to CTC

- Raise awareness of safety issue.
- Update master plan.
- Formalize partnership efforts.
- Evaluate rest area system performance.
- Investigate truck parking capacity.
- Maintain stakeholder involvement.
- Update standards and guidelines.

Caltrans efforts

■ 2000 District Rest Area Teams

Statewide Safety Roadside Rest Area System Master Plan

- All 88 existing rest areas to be rehabilitated.
- 80 new Rest Areas proposed
- Privatization and Joint Development for new Rest Areas

2000 Master Plan



Mandated Rehabilitation

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
 - ◆ Structure
 - ◆ Circulation
 - ◆ Communication
- **Compliance by 2008**
- **CalOSHA**
 - ◆ Worker crew room



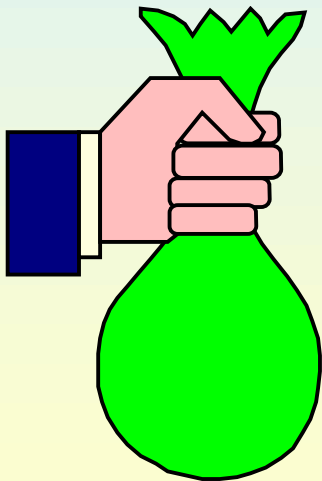
Modern Design Standards



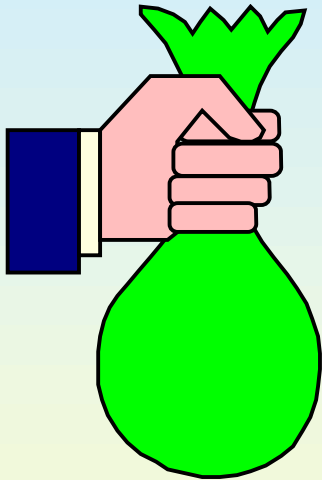
- **CHP office and crew room.**
- **Improved utility systems, lighting, security.**
- **Geometric design.**
- **Maintainability.**

System Investment

- **\$3.6 million** *rehabilitation projects completed or under construction.*
- **\$7 million** *rehabilitation projects will be delivered in the 01-02 FY.*



System Investment



- **\$51 million** in *rehabilitation projects are identified for programming in 2002 SHOPP.*
- **\$32 million** in *new rest area projects are identified in the “Long Lead” list of G-13 projects.*

Caltrans' VISION for the Safety Roadside Rest Area System

- Safe drivers - reduce fatigue.
- Distribute system capacity.
- Increase truck parking opportunities.
- Reduce gaps between rest areas to less than 60 miles.
- Implement the 2000 master plan.